3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

ORIGIN AND EXPANSION OF THE SANUSIYA

praise of which many poems have been written by Brothers of the Order. The Grand Sanusi forbad music, dancing, and singing in the recitations of the Order, but in this he was at one with all the official spokesmen of Islam. Most reformist movements in Islam tend towards asceticism.

Far from being extreme ascetics, however, the Sanusi Brothers eat and dress well, even using scent, and are amiable and merry companions. The Tunisian scholar and traveller Muhammad 'Uthman al-Hashaishi, who travelled in 1896 via Malta, Tripoli, and Banghazi to Kufra to visit al-Sayyid al-Mahdi and met the leading Brothers of the time, remarks that 'they are fond of diversions, honest jesting. I have visited many of their zawiyas and I have made the acquaintance of many of their notables: I have seen only cheerful and smiling faces, welcoming me with benevolence and kindness. May God reward them!'[1]

The Grand Sanusi discouraged the trappings of poverty by his example, his exhortations, and his insistence on the Brothers being self-supporting. Although the Heads of the Sanusiya Order, like the Wahhabi leaders, encouraged settlement on the land, they can hardly have hoped to have greatly influenced the Bedouin to this end; but they insisted on the lodges of the Order supporting themselves by agriculture supplemented by stock-raising, and thereby took a stand against *ittikal*, the dependence for livelihood on alms and not on labour which some mendicant Orders have advocated.

The Order has always been, in fact, conventional as well as orthodox. In its early period it was essentially a missionary Order with the limited aim of bringing by peaceful persuasion the Bedouin Arabs and the peoples of the Sahara and the Sudan to a fuller understanding of the beliefs and morals of Islam, while giving them at the same time the blessings of civilization: justice, peace, trade, and education. Its principles were, as Shaikh Muhammad 'Uthman says, simply 'to do good and avoid evil'.[2]

The accusation of fanaticism is not borne out by either the character of the Bedouin adherents of the Order or by its actions,

[1] Mohammed ben Otsmane el-Hachaichi, *Voyage au Pays des Senoussia à travers La Tripolitaine et les Pays Touareg*, 1912, p. 128 (1st ed.: 1903).
[2] Ibid., p. 86.

6: Peters E-5 (1948-1950) 1965 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Cyrenaica

Chapter

7

*Aspects of the Family Among the Bedouin of Cyrenaica**

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Marriage and the Father-Son Relationship

When a marriage takes place among the Bedouin of Cyrenaica, a nuptial tent is set up some distance away from that of the groom's father. There is no particular significance about the nuptial tent itself, but it must be pitched at a distance so that the father "will not see it" — although, obviously, in a country of large level plains, it stands out conspicuously. This pretence that the tent remains unseen by the father is pushed to the point of his denying any knowledge of what is afoot. A middle-aged or elderly man with a family adopts a similar attitude to any marriage in which his son participates, as groom or as guest. An elder, the father of three unmarried sons (one of whom, in his late twenties, was known to be getting impatient about marriage), when I asked after his eldest son, insisted that he was away with the camels, although the son was conspicuous in a semicircle of young men encouraging a blindfolded maiden in the movements of her seductive dance outside a wedding tent in his full view. Prior to the wedding festivities, the

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Cases

584 593 Prior to the wedding festivities, the father will have participated in negotiations, although even in these he will have remained silent, leaving an affine, as a rule, to arrange the details with the girl's father and his kinsmen. The father feigns aloofness from the start of negotiations until after the wedding celebrations have ended. Before inquiring into this seemingly odd behaviour, a few further details of marriage ceremonies need to be mentioned briefly.

585 342 [492] [788] The bride is carried to the nuptial tent on a camel, seated in a cagelike structure placed on the camel's back, this canopy covered over with carpets and at least one long blanket — later to be used to divide her tent into male and female quarters — which constitute part of the goods given to a woman on marriage. On her arrival, while she is still seated in her canopy, the camel is led round the tent seven times by a small boy. She then descends and is hustled into the tent by a number of women who make a show of their attempts to conceal her from view. Inside the tent the bride is enclosed in one corner in a kind of cubicle partitioned off by a length of blanket.

585 [533] [831] In the meantime, the groom has affected to escape, but is "caught," while running away, by his fellows, who "compel" him to return to the nuptial tent, to the accompaniment of their lewd songs telling of the sexual pleasures awaiting him. Much of this is horseplay, but the young men carry it out brazenly and the groom is required to show reluctance to continue with the ceremonies. His entry into the nuptial tent is marked by an expectant hush that falls over the crowd of men gathered, as they await the result of the virginity test the groom is about to perform, which he does by wrapping part of his toga round one of his fingers to pierce the hymen. Sharp shrieks from [202] the bride give the signal that the test has been undertaken; not a stir moves the crowd until evidence of its success has been publicly displayed, which is given by the groom hoisting the blood-stained portion of the toga through the corner of the tent on a pole, followed by firing three shots from his rifle. Jubilantly, the men gathered fire volley after volley from their rifles just over the nuptial tent, and the seven-day celebrations begin.

585 589 [593] [561] A full descriptive account of a marriage, or many of the ritual details woven into it need not be given here. What is included is intended to illustrate certain relationships between father and son, and between one generation and another. In this connection two further points are appropriate. First, during the week of festival, young men gather outside the nuptial [535] tent each night to encourage a maiden in her dancing, clapping their hands [533] to the point of injury "so that we will have a wife soon." The celebrations belong to the bachelors, and they are the only ones to engage in the singing and hand clapping. It is they too who stop the bridal camel on its way to [538] the nuptial tent to recite obscene rhymes to the bride, and they also shout [831] their rather dubious consolations to the bride who, during the virginity test, crying out for her mother, is assured by them that the night holds promise 585 for her which her mother could never extend. The married men, particularly 602 the close senior agnates of the groom, stay away from it all, discussing mat- 521 ters unconnected with the affair.